

A pregnant adolescent should receive private counseling whether or not she is accompanied by another person. Most pregnant girls, especially the youngest, do come with a parent to visit a health facility. Ninety percent of those under fifteen report that one parent knows about the pregnancy; 43 percent report that both parents know.<sup>17</sup> Unless a provider tells them, however, many of these young patients will not realize the extent to which they are entitled to make health care decisions.<sup>18</sup>

A pregnant minor's desire for confidentiality must almost always be respected. (For the exceptions under North Carolina law, see the "Minors Seeking Care for Certain Conditions" section, above.) When a minor is accompanied by a parent, medical and nursing association policy statements advise providers to meet separately with the patient to counsel her, to seek the most sensitive information, and to learn how and whether she wants her parent to be involved in her medical care.<sup>19</sup> The American Academy of Pediatricians (AAP) policy is typical. It recommends that the diagnosis of pregnancy be delivered to a minor patient alone and that she should then be urged, particularly if she is a younger adolescent, to involve her parents and partner. While that is best for most patients, the AAP realizes that for some patients, their parent or partner is not a supportive figure. In those instances, the Academy's advice is that "minors should be urged to seek the advice and

17. ALAN GUTTMACHER INSTITUTE, *SEX AND AMERICA'S TEENAGERS* 49 (1994).

18. Except for abortion, a pregnant girl is fully entitled as long as she is competent. In the case of abortion *she* must consent, but a parent or other specified adult also must consent or a judge must waive the adult consent requirement. On the subject of minors' competence, see Lois A. Weithorn, *Involving Children in Decisions Affecting Their Own Welfare: Guidelines for Professionals*, in *CHILDREN'S COMPETENCE TO CONSENT* at 252 (Gary B. Melton et al. eds., 1983).

19. AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY (ACOG), *Confidentiality in Adolescent Health Care*, ACOG EDUCATIONAL BULLETIN No. 249 (Aug. 1998); ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S HEALTH, OBSTETRIC AND NEONATAL NURSES (AWHONN) POSITION STATEMENT: CONFIDENTIALITY IN ADOLESCENT HEALTH CARE (*reaffirmed* 1995); AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, GUIDELINES FOR ADOLESCENT PREVENTIVE SERVICES: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHYSICIANS AND OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (n.d.).